

IN THE SCHOOLS

The region’s teachers try to reassure nervous students as parents voice concerns about safety. **A6**

HELP FOR SANDY HOOK

Individuals and organizations begin mobilizing to help relatives of shooting victims. **A7**

ON THE WEB

Up-to-the minute coverage, profiles of the victims and a link to post condolences at **www.ctpost.com**

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New details emerge

THE FUNERALS BEGIN



Veronika Pozner, above, leaves the Abraham L. Green Funeral home in Fairfield on Monday after the funeral for her 6-year-old son, Noah, killed in Friday’s shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown. Below, mourners arrive at Honan Funeral Home in Newtown, for Monday’s funeral of Jack Pinto, 6, another victim of the Sandy Hook shooting.



Ned Gerard/Staff photographer

THE EVIDENCE

Investigators trying to determine what led to rampage

By Michael P. Mayko

NEWTOWN — Investigators seized cellphones, computers and computer games during a search of mass murderer Adam Lanza’s home — but found no evidence that he was being treated with any drugs prescribed for mental illness, a source told Hearst Connecticut Newspapers.

Investigators are using search warrants to get medical records to determine if Lanza was being treated for a medical or psychiatric ailment, and what, if anything, was prescribed, the source said.

Lanza’s parents told friends and divorce mediators that he had Asperger’s syndrome, a form of high-functioning autism, but it is unclear if he had ever been formally diagnosed. All this could be critical in determining what caused Lanza to crack and pump four bullets into his mother, Nancy Lanza, 52, who sources said was found dead in bed. After killing his mother, Lanza grabbed two pistols, an assault rifle, a hunting rifle and hundreds of rounds of high-powered ammunition and went on a killing spree inside Sandy Hook Elementary School, mowing down 20 students and six staffers. Hearing approaching police smash windows as they began entering the school, Lanza sought cover in another room and shot himself in the head, just about four minutes after his rampage began. “It could have been a lot worse,” said a second source, who was at the scene Friday. “He still had hundreds of more

“Was he on meds? Did he go off meds? How was his relationship with his mother? What video games did he play? How often did he play? Where did he learn to shoot? How often did he shoot? ... Forensics are going to tell us who died where and when. What they want to determine is why.”

Robert Paquette, former FBI agent

See Details on A2

‘JUST AN INCREDIBLE PERSON’

Friends rooting for recovery of wounded teacher

By Nanci G. Hutson

NEWTOWN — Natalie Hammond was probably cracking jokes Friday morning when she went to a staff meeting in the principal’s office at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Hammond, described Monday by her best friend as “one of the funniest people on the planet,” would have been feeling good because it was her daughter Kayla’s 12th birthday.

Hammond, the recently promoted lead teacher at the school,

is one of two wounded survivors of the nightmare that befell Sandy Hook on Friday.

At about 9:30 a.m., she ran out of a meeting with Principal Dawn Hochsprung and school psychologist Mary Sherlach. They came face-to-face with 20-year-old

Adam Lanza, who had just shot his way into the school with a high-powered semiautomatic rifle.

Lanza’s burst of fire killed Hochsprung and Sherlach. Hammond was shot in the foot, leg and hand, but managed to crawl to safety behind a door. Lanza then

went down the hall to two classrooms, where he killed 20 children and four teachers.

Ten minutes later, Lanza fired a bullet into his own head.

Hammond’s survival is hailed by her friends as a miracle.

See Friends on A2

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WEATHER

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## TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN



Ned Gerard/Staff photographer

A memorial filled with flowers, candles and stuffed animals has been set up on Main Street in Newtown on Monday, the first day of funerals for victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings last Friday.

# Details emerge in Sandy Hook shooting

**Continued from A1**

rounds. I'm convinced he would have continued going from classroom to classroom. He only killed himself because he heard the police arrive."

Detectives are poring through cellphone records and voice-mails, viewing text messages and social network pages and analyzing computer equipment seized from his mother's upscale home, hoping to find answers.

"They are looking at everything," said Robert Paquette, who as an FBI agent investigated murders, organized crime and the Colombian drug cartel. "They are poring over anything and everything. Was he on meds? Did he go off meds? How was his relationship with his mother? What video games did he play? How often did he play? Where did he learn to shoot? How often did he shoot? ... Forensics are going to tell us who died where and when. What they want to determine is why."

Paquette said behavioral scientists, psychological and medical experts are likely on the team working with the State Police to uncover these answers.

"There's no one expert that will be able to tell all this," said Paquette, who also served as the FBI head in Bridgeport and the police chief in Danbury. "It's going to come from a conglomeration poring over the evidence."

But, he said, they may never come to a definitive conclusion. "Unfortunately, the two people best able to tell are dead," he said.

Nancy Lanza's home on Yo-



A group of girls stops to place flowers on a memorial on Main Street in Newtown on Monday.

gananda Street and Sandy Hook Elementary School are being treated as guarded crime scenes for the foreseeable future, according to State Police Lt. J. Paul Vance, who would not comment on what was discovered during the search of the Lanza home.

"We did seize significant evidence at the residence," Vance said. "We do not discuss evidence, its content or detail what it is."

But much of the evidence

seized involved video and Internet gaming material, according to a source.

"It's pretty clear he was an avid gamer," a source said.

"Many of these games are very, very violent," said Paquette. "I can't help but believe these can affect the minds of someone unbalanced."

Inside Sandy Hook Elementary School, dozens of rounds are still embedded in the walls, cabinets, closets and floors.

"I can't imagine what it looked like to go into that place," Paquette said. "No one could possibly be prepared to see something like that."

He wondered what Nancy Lanza, who reportedly took Adam to shooting ranges for target practice, was thinking by allowing her troubled son to learn to use an assault rifle.

"Maybe she was trying to be more of a friend to him than a mother," Paquette said.

The school is not expected to reopen this year and many question whether it should ever reopen.

On Monday, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed an emergency order allowing Newtown to transfer Sandy Hook's 500 kindergarten-through-fourth-grade students to Chalk Hill Middle School in Monroe for the remainder of the school year.

The governor also called upon churches across the state to ring their bells 26 times Friday at 9:30 a.m. in tribute to the victims.

Meanwhile, parents began the task of burying their children Monday.

Funerals for Noah Ponzer and Jack Pinto took place in Fairfield and Newtown, respectively.

Preparations by other families led to the release of more gruesome details of those horrifying four minutes that have broken a nation's hearts.

Ian and Nicole Hockley sought comfort by telling the world their 6-year-old special needs son, Dylan, died in the arms of his best friend, Anne Marie Murphy, a teacher's aide.

Staring down the barrel of Lanza's assault rifle, she pulled the boy close to her almost as if to shield him from the approaching hail of bullets.

"We take great comfort knowing that Dylan was not alone when he died," his parents said in a prepared statement.

The Hockleys moved to Newtown from England just two years ago.

# Friends say wounded teacher has great strength, wit

**Continued from A1**

Prior to the shooting spree, Lanza killed his mother, Nancy, with a handgun from the legally obtained arsenal of weaponry she kept in the house they shared.

Hammond is "just an incredible person ... a great mom," said Anika Sonski, of Naugatuck, Hammond's best friend of 22 years, a roommate and sorority sister at Gettysburg College where Hammond earned an elementary education and sociology degree in 1994. "It's impossible to have an interaction with her and not laugh. And she's incredibly caring."

Before her promotion this year, Hammond was a third-grade teacher at the school for about a decade, Sonski said. Her career was on the rise, with her intent to undergo the extra education needed to become an elementary school

principal, she said.

"We're just blessed she's still with us," Sonski said.

David Verespy, Hammond's classmate at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull, said word that Hammond was a shooting victim spread quickly through their tight-knit alumni group. He described Hammond as "a very sweet person."

Sonski said she learned of the shooting late that morning. At work in Waterbury, Sonski said she heard there was a shooting in Newtown, but never imagined her friend might be in danger as she works in a neighborhood school.

Then, as more fragments of the tale were assembled, she suddenly feared for her friend's life.

"I felt helpless," Sonski said.

Later that afternoon, she received texts from Hammond's hus-



Natalie Hammond and her family in a photo on her Facebook page.

band, Jerry, and parents, George and Rita Green, of Southbury, that confirmed she was wounded but alive.

"And then I kind of lost it," Sonski said.

Not until she was able to touch and speak to her Saturday did she really believe her friend had survived.

"I felt I could exhale again," Sonski said.

To protect Hammond's privacy and that of her family, Sonski will not talk about her condition, prognosis or where she is being treated — her family is in a self-imposed seclusion due to the barrage of media that has surrounded them. Sonski said she knows only the barest details of what occurred. Their visit was about a special sisterhood, and her desire to laugh with her friend once again.

The two met just before their freshman year. Hammond was attending volleyball camp. Sonski was an early arrival.

"We hit it off right away, and we've been best friends ever

since," said Sonski, herself a mother of two young girls.

Outside the schoolhouse, Sonski said her friend is a "total outdoor freak."

Sonski said her best friend loves to go camping; Hammond's husband is a fisherman, and she loves to race mountain bikes.

Sonski admitted such excursions make her cringe. To humor her friend, she went mountain biking with her once some time ago in Danbury. "And that was enough for me," Sonski said.

Once her friend is back in action, Sonski might change her tune. And she has no doubt her friend will recover.

The when is not as important as the will, she said.

"She has amazing fight, and she'll attack it. It will be a daunting task, for sure. But she's still here."



TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN

# Services celebrate victims' lives



Brian A. Pounds/Staff photographer

Mourners leave the Abraham L. Green and Son Funeral Home in Fairfield on Monday for services for 6-year-old Noah Pozner, killed in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

NOAH SAMUEL POZNER, 6

## Uncle: A 'great man,' had he lived

By John Burgeson

FAIRFIELD — About 200 mourners Monday celebrated the short life of Noah Samuel Pozner, a sweet-faced child who was killed Friday in one of the most horrific crimes in anyone's memory.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy was among those who attended the ceremony.

Noah, 6, was described by his uncle Alexis Haller as "smart as a whip," with a rambunctious streak. His twin sister, Arielle, was also in the school Friday morning, but in a different classroom. She survived.

"They were always playing together, they loved to do things together," Haller said. "When his mother, a nurse, would tell him she loved him, he would answer, 'Not as much as I love you, Mom.'"

In his eulogy, Haller said that Noah would have been a great man, had he lived. "He was already a very good reader and had just bought a Ninjago book at a book fair that he was really excited about reading," Haller said. "He was also very excited about going to a birthday party he had been invited to. It was to take place on Saturday, Dec. 15."

Noah was said to be the youngest of the victims. Some of the mourners said afterward the fact that there were many there who had no connection to Noah brought at least some measure of comfort to the devastated family.

The boy was also movingly eulogized by his mom, Veronique, those who were at the service said. He's also survived by his father, Lenny, as well as his brothers and sisters Danielle, Michael, Sophia and his twin, Arielle.



Mourners leave the Abraham L. Green and Son Funeral Home in Fairfield on Monday for the funeral of 6-year-old Noah Pozner, killed in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.



Noah Pozner

Noah's service was among the first of what will become a week of funerals and wakes; 20 children and six school staff members were killed in the slaughter at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

"It was a very touching and very moving ceremony," said Rabbi Yehoshua S. Hecht, the spiritual leader of Beth Israel of Westport and Norwalk. "It was good to see that there were so many people who did not know the family came and participated."

Hecht said that Noah was celebrated as a "pure, innocent child" who brought joy to all who knew him.

"As his older brother said, 'He could have been anything had he had the chance to grow,'" he said.

Security was tight at the event, and not just because it was attended by the governor, Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Sen.-elect Christopher Murphy, as well as other dignitaries. Police spokesman Lt. James Perez said that as a precaution the nearby parking lots, grounds and even the flowers sent to the home were carefully checked for anything out of the ordinary.

A detail of about 25 Fairfield officers was assigned to the funeral; they were joined by a half-dozen state troopers.

The street in front of the Abraham L. Green and Son Funeral Home on Beach Road was festooned with scores of white balloons.

Noah was later buried at the B'nai Israel Cemetery in Monroe.



Ned Gerard/Staff photographer

A family leaves the Honan Funeral Home in Newtown following the funeral of Jack Pinto, 6, on Monday. Pinto was one of 20 students killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School last Friday.

JACK PINTO, 6

## Buried with favorite Giants jersey

By John Pirro

NEWTOWN — Mourners waited in a chilling drizzle Monday to say goodbye to 6-year-old Jack Pinto, the first of 20 children and six adults to be laid to rest after they were murdered Friday at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Hundreds of men, women and children, many appearing no older than the brown-haired, first-grader who loved wrestling and idolized New York Giants wide receiver Victor Cruz, stood patiently in line at the Honan Funeral Home, sharing quiet conversations, umbrellas, and even coats, before filing past his tiny, ivory casket.

Scores of television and newspaper photographers lined Main Street opposite the funeral home, a three-story, white clapboard building with black shutters, where the viewing took place, while a young people's choral group sang hymns.

Jack was buried at the Newtown Village Cemetery, wearing a white Giants jersey bearing the red number 80, the same number worn by Cruz, and with a gray-and-white stuffed fish nestled in his left arm.

The interior of the funeral home was filled with photos of Jack eating chocolate ice cream bars with his brother, laughing, playing, and a close-up image of him with a blue "NY" tattoo on his cheek representing the football team.

Among the youngsters paying their respects were friends from the Newtown Youth Wrestling Association — Jack was one of the youngest members — wearing gray jerseys, and football teammates clad in dark blue uniform tops.



The hearse carrying Jack Pinto, 6, leaves Honan Funeral Home in Newtown en route to Newtown Village Cemetery during his funeral on Monday. Pinto was one of 20 students killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School.



Jack Pinto

"Jack, I'm glad you were my friend," one youngster wrote in the guest book, which visitors signed as they entered the funeral home.

An ambulance and paramedic were summoned to the funeral home shortly after 1 p.m., but left without transporting any patients.

About 100 family members and friends attended the grave-site service at the cemetery, situated on a rolling hillside less than a mile from the funeral home.

Jack's parents, Dean and Tricia Pinto, and both sets of grandparents choked back sobs as clergyman said prayers. Others, including the boy's former baseball coach, delivered brief eulogies.

"Jack was the boy that everybody wanted on their team," said Shari Butler, who helped coach his baseball and basketball squads for the past two years. He could make every catch, hit every ball and "put his heart into every throw," Butler said.

At the same time, services for a second victim, Noah Pozner, were being held in Fairfield. Pozner, also 6, was buried at the B'nai Israel Cemetery in Monroe.

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### A WEEK OF MOURNING

## Funeral details set for some school shooting victims

#### Staff reports

The funerals for victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings continue Tuesday.

The funeral for **Victoria Leigh Soto**, a teacher at the school, is scheduled for Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Lordship Community Church, 190 Prospect Drive, Stratford. Burial will follow at Union Cemetery in Stratford. Calling hours will be 3 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Adzima Funeral Home, 50 Paradise Green Place, Stratford.

The funeral for **Daniel Barden**, 7, will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church, 46 Church Hill Road, Newtown. Burial will follow at St. Rose Cemetery on Cherry Street, at the corner of Black Cherry Lane. Friends can call at the church,

from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

A Mass of Christian Burial for 6-year-old **James R. Mattioli** will be held at St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church in Newtown Tuesday at 10 a.m. with burial to follow at St. John's Cemetery in Darien.

Calling hours for Sandy Hook Elementary School Principal **Dawn Hochsprung** will be at the Munson-Lovetere Funeral Home, 2 School St., Woodbury, on Wednesday from 3 to 8 p.m. Burial will be private.

The family of **Chase Kowalski** will receive friends at the Spadaccino and Leo P. Gallagher & Son Funeral Home in Monroe on Wednesday from 2 to 6 p.m. with prayer vigils throughout the afternoon. The family asks that the public visitation end at 5:45 to

allow a brief period of privacy.

A Mass of Christian Burial for **Caroline P. Previdi** will be held at noon on Wednesday at St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church, Burial will be private, and arrangements are under the care of Green Funeral Home, Danbury.

The funeral for **Charlotte H. Bacon** will be held at Christ the King Lutheran Church, at 85 Mt. Pleasant Road in Newtown, on Wednesday at 1 p.m., followed by burial at Newtown Village Cemetery. Calling hours are at the church on Tuesday from 4 to 7 p.m.

The funeral for **Rachel D'Avino**, 29, will be held Friday at the Church of Nativity, East Street, Bethlehem, Conn., at 11 a.m. Burial will be at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Watertown. Friends may

call at Woodbury Funeral Home of Munson-Lovetere, 2 School St., Woodbury, on Thursday from 2 to 4 p.m.

A funeral Mass for **Catherine Hubbard**, 6, will be held Thursday at 10 a.m. at St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church in Newtown. Burial will follow at St. Rose Cemetery, Cherry Street. Calling hours are Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m. at the church.

Calling hours for **Charlotte Bacon**, 6, will be held Tuesday from 4 to 7 p.m. at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 85 Mt. Pleasant Road in Newtown. Funeral services are at 1 p.m. Wednesday at the church. Burial will follow at Newtown Village Cemetery, 22 Elm Drive in Newtown.

The funeral of **Benjamin Andrew Wheeler**, 6, will be held

Thursday at 11 a.m. at All Trinity Episcopal Church at 36 Main St., Newtown. Calling hours are Wednesday from 4 to 8 p.m. at the church. Burial will be private.

A public memorial service for **Dylan Christopher Jack Hockley**, 6, will be held at 1 p.m. Friday at Walnut Hill Community Church at 156 Walnut Hill Road, Bethel.

Funeral services for **Jessica Rekos**, 6, will be Tuesday at noon at St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church. Burial will follow at St. Rose Cemetery on Cherry Street. Calling hours are private.

Calling hours for **Lauren Gabrielle Rousseau**, of Danbury, will be held 10 a.m. Thursday at First Congregational Church, 154 Deer Hill Ave., Danbury, followed by a memorial service for friends, co-workers and family at 11 a.m.



## TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN

CONGRESSIONAL LAWMAKERS REASSESSING THEIR VIEWS

# Ground may be shifting on gun control

By Dan Freedman  
and Richard S. Dunham

WASHINGTON — Advocates of stricter gun legislation, emboldened by a shift in public opinion following last week's school shootings in Newtown, pushed Monday for a renewed assault weapons ban and other gun control measures that have failed to gain traction over the past decade.

Three days after a gunman took the lives of 20 children and six adults with a Bushmaster .223 semi-automatic rifle, several pro-gun lawmakers — including Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. — said they were willing to consider new firearms legislation.

"We need to accept the reality that we are not doing enough to protect our citizens," Reid said in a statement on the Senate floor. "In the coming days and weeks, we will engage in a meaningful conversation and thoughtful debate about how to change laws and culture that allow violence to grow."

Even Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., a longtime NRA member with an A-rating from the powerful gun lobbying organization, said "everything should be on the table."

Appearing on MSNBC, he added that Second Amendment rights would not necessarily be violated by controls on high-capacity magazines. "I've never had more than three shells in a clip," said Manchin. "I'm a proud outdoorsman and hunter, but this doesn't make sense."

Statements from Democrats such as Reid, Manchin and Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., — who said



Steve Helber/ Associated press file photo

In this Monday Jan. 21, 2008, file photo, Virginia Tech shooting victim Colin Goddard speaks during a rally in Richmond, Va., supporting a bill to close the gun show loophole. Some of the families of students killed in the mass shooting at Virginia Tech are continuing to press for federal legislation to close the so-called gun-show loophole.

Monday "the status quo isn't acceptable" — are a key measure of strength for gun control because even though the party is generally sympathetic to restraints on firearms, these senators and others with significant pro-gun rural constituencies have insulated themselves in Republican-leaning states in part by championing gun rights.

But it wasn't just lawmakers who were reassessing their views. Support for stricter gun control measures has reached a five-year high in the aftermath of the Con-

necticut school massacre, according to a new ABC News/Washington Post poll released Monday.

Fifty-four percent of Americans back new controls on guns, and 59 percent back curbs on the high-capacity ammunition clips used in many of the recent shooting rampages.

Another shift: Gun control supporters now have more intensity than opponents of stricter controls. Forty-four percent of Americans say they "strongly" favor stricter action while 32 percent say they oppose new controls

"strongly."

Gun control advocates — led by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and backed by Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy — pushed for swift action in Washington.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said she would introduce an "updated" assault weapons ban that would outlaw 100 specifically-named firearms, weapons that can accept detachable magazines as well as certain semiautomatic rifles, handguns and shotguns that can accept a detachable magazine and semiautomatic rifles and handguns with a fixed magazine that can accept more than 10 rounds.

Feinstein is the author of the assault weapons ban that became law in 1994 but expired in 2004 when Congress refused to renew it.

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., also is likely to reintroduce legislation to require universal background checks on all weapons transactions. Current law requires background checks on weapons sold by federally licensed firearms dealers. Schumer's measure, along with a similar bill by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., in the House, would also require background checks on transactions between private parties, with a few exceptions.

Nevertheless, members of Congress who favor gun control face what may prove to be an insurmountable barrier of lawmakers from both parties who are not likely to change their support for gun rights.

For the most part, pro-gun Republicans who control the House

remained conspicuously silent Monday. "One indisputable call to action from the Connecticut tragedy — SECURE YOUR GUNS IF YOU OWN THEM," Rep. John Carter, R-Texas, said via Twitter.

But opposition to new laws nevertheless percolated from a few House members such as Rep. Gene Green, D-Texas. "Instead of saying we need to outlaw certain types of weapons, we need to find better ways to enforce current law," Green said in an interview. "The kneejerk approach of those who want to control firearms may not be the solution."

He predicted that neither the proposed assault weapons ban nor the expanded background-checks proposal "would move in the House."

Gun control advocates acknowledge the climb may be steep to get gun-control legislation through Congress. But they say that unlike previous incidents such as the one at a movie theater in Aurora, Colo., in July, in which a shooter, James Holmes, took the lives of 12 and wounded 57, the drumbeat for change in gun laws is much stronger in the wake of the Connecticut shootings.

"We have to change the paradigm and culture on this issue," said Colin Goddard, federal of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, who survived four gunshot wounds in the 2007 Virginia Tech attack in which 32 died. "We've got to get over the dismal, bleak outlook that nothing can be done."

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Seth Perlman/Associated Press file photo

In this March 7 file photo, gun owners and supporters participate in an Illinois Gun Owners Lobby Day rally at the Illinois State Capitol in Springfield.

## Gun-rights advocate suggests arming teachers

By Kevin Fagan

Gun-rights advocate Jeff Dunhill has a simple plan for preventing the next bloodbath like the one that left 20 children and six adults dead at a Connecticut elementary school on Friday — arm the teachers.

Anti-gun activists and the leader of San Francisco's teachers union counter that what the Walnut Creek gun backer is pitching is a terrible idea.

More guns only invites more violence, they said.

But in the wake of the Newtown massacre, as politicians and gun-control lobbyists call for stricter gun control, all viewpoints are on the table. And seldom have passions been so extreme.

Dunhill's position has been reloaded and propounded by fellow gun-rights advocates for decades, but it rose to renewed prominence this week with a Texas gun dealer offering discounts for arming teachers and the governor of Michigan saying he is considering legislation

to allow concealed weapons on school grounds.

"There is always going to be a lag time between when trouble starts and when the police come — so what are you going to do?" said Dunhill, who unsuccessfully fought California laws prohibiting citizens from openly carrying unloaded guns in public. "Defend yourself, that's what."

He said he would prefer that any gun-carrying school officials be trained "to the same level that you'd expect for law enforcement or concealed weapon permit carriers." But the important thing, he and others said, is that — given the number of guns in the country already — the playing field needs to be leveled.

Echoing the longtime argument of gun-rights activists, he said, "It wasn't the gun's fault, it was the 20-year-old kid who pulled the trigger."

Not so fast, said Dennis Kelly, president of the United Educators of San Francisco, which represents 6,000 teachers and other staff.

His union will consider a resolu-

tion Tuesday urging a nationwide ban on all assault weapons. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., echoed the sentiment on Monday, announcing that she will introduce legislation for a stiffer version of the national assault weapons ban she authored in 1994, which expired a decade later.

Police say Adam Lanza, 20, used a high-velocity, semiautomatic Bushmaster .223 assault rifle in the elementary-school rampage Friday, as well as two semiautomatic pistols.

"Arming teachers makes no sense at all to me," Kelly said. "This kind of response, calling for guns in schools, is very shallow and indicative of those who look for the simplest solutions without thinking it through."

There is plenty of evidence to say arming the average Joe and Joan for general defense is a good tactic — and just as much saying it isn't.

A frequently cited study, "More Guns, Less Crime" by gun-rights researcher John Lott, says the probability of serious injury in an attack is four times greater for women re-

sisting without a gun, and 1½ times greater for men. The report, written in 1998 and updated in the past decade, also maintains that homicide rates are 127 percent higher in states that ban concealed weapons.

However, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, an influential gun control group founded in San Francisco after the 101 California St. massacre of 1993, says having a gun in the home increases the risk of death at least 40 percent. And a University of Pennsylvania study contends that people carrying guns are 4.4 times more likely to be shot during an assault than those who aren't.

"If more guns made a safer America, we'd be the safest country in the world," said Juliet Leftwich, legal director of the law center. "But we're not."

About 30,000 people die every year in gun-related incidents, more than in any other industrialized country, according to the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

Even the polls are split.

On one hand, a poll taken in July by the national Mayors Against Illegal Guns group found that requiring criminal background checks of all prospective gun owners was favored by 74 percent of the members of the National Rifle Association, the nation's largest gun-rights lobby. Support for the background checks clocked in at 87 percent among non-NRA gun owners.

More than 40 percent of the guns sold in America are sold by unlicensed dealers, who are not required under federal law to do background checks. California is one of five states to have closed that loophole.

But on the other hand, a 2011 Gallup poll found that a record-low 26 percent of Americans wanted to see handguns banned in America. That figures was 60 percent when Gallup asked the same question in 1959.

An ABC News/Washington Post poll released after the Newtown killings found that 54 percent of Americans now favor "stricter gun control laws."



## TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN

DESPITE REPORTS OF WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH’S PLANS

# Town skips anti-protest ordinance

By John Pirro

NEWTOWN — Reacting to reports that Westboro Baptist Church is planning to protest at funerals for the victims of last week’s massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School, town officials briefly considered — but ultimately didn’t act on — a proposed emergency ordinance to keep members of the controversial church away from the services.

The measure, based on a state ordinance barring protests in close proximity to funerals, had been on the agenda for Monday’s emergency meeting of the Legislative Council, but the

meeting adjourned without any discussion or action.

Ever since Saturday, when Shirley Phelps-Roper, a spokesperson for the controversial Topeka, Kan.-based church, announced on Twitter that the group would be coming to Connecticut, the Internet has been buzzing with condemnations of the group.

Westboro Baptist has gained notoriety for attending the funerals of members of the military killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and claiming their deaths are God’s response to the country’s tolerance of homosexuality.

Church members are attributing the murders of

26 students and teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary School to Connecticut’s recent legalization of gay marriage.

Council President Jeffrey Capeci said he opted not to raise the proposal after discussions with Police Chief Michael Kehoe. But Capeci would not disclose what the chief said that made him change his mind.

The council, along with the Board of Education and Board of Finance, did approve an agreement with the town of Monroe that allows Sandy Hook students and faculty to use the vacant Chalk Hill School when classes resume. No date has been set for that to happen.

There is no evidence that Westboro members are really coming to Newtown — the church is also known for making such threats of protest, then not following through.

Two years ago, Westboro Baptist members claimed they would picket outside the Brookfield Theatre for the Arts’ production of “The Laramie Project,” a play about a gay teen who was brutally beaten and killed. The threatened protest did not materialize.

The church, founded by Baptist preacher and disbarred attorney Fred Phelps, consists of about 40 people, mostly members of his fam-

ily. Their previous actions at military funerals have featured posters that say “God Hates Fags” and “Thank God for Dead Soldiers.”

The first two funerals for the Sandy Hook victims, first-graders Jack Pinto and Noah Pozner, were held Monday, and several more are scheduled for the rest of the week.

Phelps-Roper’s announcement sparked a response from the Internet hacker collective Anonymous, which published private information on many Westboro members, including email addresses, phone numbers and home addresses.

Tweets also have condemned the church and hinted at possible retribution.

“Keep it up Westboro and the hate you kindle might end up aimed at you. But then that would just be gods will, right?” Twitter user “Jan B” posted Monday afternoon.

“For the very 1st. time in my life, I have to approve the actions of “the hacktivist group Anonymous”.... Enough is enough. Stop all Westboro’s activities by all means necessary,” a Twitter poster identified as “Bill of Rights” said.

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Michael Duffy/Staff photographer

Police respond to a report of a man carrying a rifle at the Branchville Train Station in Ridgefield. The report turned out to be false, police said.

SCHOOLS LOCKED DOWN

## Man openly carrying umbrella charged with breach of peace

By Robert Miller

RIDGEFIELD — Wilfredo Seda was arrested Monday for openly carrying an umbrella.

And also for dressing in black.

His appearance caused an uproar here Monday morning that included a police search of the Branchville and Georgetown area and routing school buses away from the Branchville Elementary School.

Seda, 22, lives on Portland Avenue in the Georgetown section of Redding.

About 8 a.m., he was walking in the area near Route 7 and Portland Avenue.

By police accounts, he was wearing all black clothing, and a black cap with a face mask. The mask, police said, was “looking like a beard.”

He was also carrying an umbrella on his back. Police said, “It had the outward appearance of a samurai sword.”

However, police said a motorist passing Seda reported that he was “carrying what appeared to be a rifle.”

With fear generated by



Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi, left, stands with police at Florida Road leading to Branchville Elementary School as they respond to a report of a man carrying a rifle.

the events at Sandy Hook Elementary School on everyone’s mind, members of the Police Department, assisted by what police said were “many other law enforcement agencies,” hurried to the area.

That combined force included State Police and officers from the Westport, Norwalk, Danbury and Bethel police departments.

Students had not yet

begun arriving at the nearby Branchville Middle School.

Officials ordered all buses en route to the school to be diverted to East Ridge Middle School, where students stayed in the school



Ridgefield police spokesman Tom Comstock speaks at a news conference after police responded to a report of a man carrying a rifle at the Branchville Train Station in Ridgefield on Monday.

auditorium.

School officials also ordered all other Ridgefield schools to go into a modified lockdown.

By 11 a.m., when police found Seda and learned what saw what he was carrying, the alert was called off.

However, Seda was charged with breach of peace.

Capt. Thomas Comstock of the Ridgefield Police Department said Seda did not take any actions that might constitute breach of peace.

Instead, Comstock said, it was Seda’s “mode” of appearance — dressed in black, with a black hood, carrying what looked to be some sort of weapon, that prompted police to charge him with breach of peace.

**It was Seda’s “mode” of appearance — dressed in black, with a black hood, carrying what looked to be some sort of weapon, that prompted police to charge him with breach of peace.**

Seda was unavailable for comment Monday afternoon.

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## TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN

AREA SCHOOLS REOPEN

# Calm educators reassure students

By Eileen FitzGerald and Linda Lambeck

At Whisconier Middle School in Brookfield, Principal Dean Renda received hugs Monday from three fifth-graders.

They said, “Thank you for keeping us safe Friday.”

It was a first for the 17-year educator, whose assistant principal, June Gordan, had to reassure five students by showing them how the front door locked.

Schools across the state faced a difficult day Monday, welcoming students for the first time since Friday, when 20-year-old Adam Lanza killed his mother at her home, then gunned down 20 students and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown before killing himself.

All seven Newtown schools were closed on Monday. Six are scheduled to reopen Tuesday. Officials have not announced the date on which Sandy Hook Elementary School students will resume classes at Chalk Hill School in Monroe.

Attendance was a lower than usual Monday in Brookfield, Bethel and New Canaan. Whisconier had twice the typical absences, school officials said.

In Greenwich, the overall absence rate was similar to last Monday's, but at Old Greenwich Elementary School, the number of empty desks jumped from 14 a week ago to 41 on Monday.

Most other schools in northern

**“We know kids work off us — our body language and our tone of voice. You have to be able to contain and control your emotions.”**

*Dean Renda, principal at Whisconier Middle School in Brookfield*

and southern Fairfield County had normal attendance.

“We did our best to stay calm and confident,” Renda said.

He said teachers wanted to show children that they were safe, and that adults would do anything for them.

“We know kids work off us — our body language and our tone of voice,” Renda said. “You have to be able to contain and control your emotions.”

Many area school officials spoke of moments of silence Monday for the Newtown victims and their families, and of how students and staff were helped by counselors.

At the same time, students began thinking about reaching out to Sandy Hook Elementary School.

In many Newtown-area schools, educators and students had connections with victims or other students in Sandy Hook.

Brookfield schools created lists of students with ties to the Sandy Hook school. Teachers made sure those Brookfield students were all right on Monday.

At Roosevelt School in Bridge-

port, Debbie Williams, a teacher's aide in a fifth-grade classroom, said students came to school filled with questions.

“It was hard,” said Williams.

“The thing we had to do was reassure them all that they are safe.”

Fairfield schools put new protocols in place Monday.

“Until further notice, all schools will have a staff member, with an ID badge, stationed at the entrance of each school to greet visitors and direct them to the main office,” Superintendent David Title said.

Title said police were stepping up their presence at all schools, and emergency preparedness measures were being reviewed.

At Bethel High School, one counselor was on hand for staff and one for students throughout the day, and they were busy, Principal Christopher Troetti said.

“First thing, we had a moment of silence,” said Troetti, who wore a green-and-white ribbon in sympathy of the Sandy Hook Elementary School community. “Then we reminded them of the safety protocols, including if they see

something suspicious, they should report it.”

Monday morning started with small groupings of students talking about how those left behind can honor those who lost their lives, Troetti said.

“We got through the day for sure,” Bethel Superintendent Kevin Smith said. “People are putting on a good face for the kids, appropriately.”

In Ansonia, counselors were available to talk with any student or staff member, said Tony Gasper, the town's assistant superintendent, and extra counselors were available from the Parent Child Resource Center in Derby.

In Stratford and Bridgeport, police were in and around all schools.

Bridgeport Superintendent Paul Vallas and Mayor Bill Finch visited Black Rock School, where they talked to parents who stayed outside the school, reluctant to leave after dropping off their children.

At Beardsley School in Bridgeport, James Morgan, 70, complained that security needed to be tighter because when he reads to a kindergarten class twice a month, few ask him who he is or why he is there.

“We should be asked to show photo ID's,” Morgan said. “The woman in the office who gives me a visitor's pass knows my face, but no one else does.”

School officials said security procedures were being reviewed. Danbury Superintendent Sal

Pascarella brought in retired staff to add counseling support for teachers and students at the city's 17 schools Monday.

“I don't think there is any formula — it's listen and provide comfort and safety,” Pascarella said. “We wanted them to feel comfortable, normal and positive.”

Sandra Atanasoff, Danbury's coordinator of pupil personal services, said the district's staff was particularly affected by the tragedy, because Sandy Hook Principal Dawn Hochsprung, who was killed, worked in Danbury for six years, and her husband, George Hochsprung, still does.

In addition, Lauren Rousseau, a teacher killed in the shooting, attended Danbury schools, and her stepmother used to work in the city school district.

“The counselors were very visible in all the schools,” Atanasoff said. “They were in the classrooms, fielding questions from kids.”

Trumbull Superintendent Ralph Iassogna sent a note telling parents that security procedures were being reviewed.

“Our hearts are filled with deep sadness and overwhelming grief over the tragic events in neighboring Newtown,” Iassogna said. “It is truly unconscionable that the sanctity of our schools again has been violated.”

*Staff writer Maggie Gordon contributed to this story.*



Norm Cummings/Staff photographer

New Milford police were stationed at the town's six schools, including Hill and Plain Elementary School, above, Friday after New Milford schools went on lockdown following a mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown earlier that day.

## Parents worried about students' safety

By Linda Conner Lambeck

Lori Baker walked her fourth-grader to Black Rock School in Bridgeport on Monday morning, like she always does, but discovered she couldn't leave.

“I am going to stay here all day — I have to worry about my kid,” she said, planting her feet firmly on the cement walkway outside the 107-year-old brick building. “I know half the kids in this school.”

She was joined by a half-dozen other moms, who huddled in a circle and stood watch.

Friday's massacre of small children 19 miles away in Newtown was on their minds and all they talked about.

Black Rock school has locked doors, security cameras and a security guard, but it wasn't enough. “They buzz you in, but then

anyone is let in,” said Mary Farrington, who has two children in the school, ages 5 and 7. Farrington said she feels guilty that her children were oblivious to the tragedy until they saw their mom was upset and started asking questions.

“They asked me if kids died, and I said yes. They asked if they were shot. I said yes,” Farrington said.

Both Mayor Bill Finch and schools Superintendent Paul Vallas went to Black Rock on Monday and spoke with Principal Karen Helyer. Instead of letting city officials address teachers or children, Helyer thought it would be less disruptive for teachers to use their own judgment to talk about the situation individually with their classes.

“The best thing to do is to make

it normal,” Helyer said as she watched students form two lines in front of the school, the smaller ones in one line, bigger in another. Vallas agreed.

Meeting outside with reporters, Finch and Vallas said that every school in the city would have a police car stationed outside Monday.

“You can never be safe enough,” Vallas said. “In this day and age, we always have to be thinking and rethinking school safety.”

“We want parents to know first and foremost their children are safe,” said Finch, whose sons transferred to Black Rock School this year. “My kids haven't even asked me about this. I am blessed they are oblivious because I don't want them to know about this at this young age.”

Shively Willingham, special assistant for safety with the school

system, said safety checks were being conducted at Bridgeport's 30 school buildings to make sure equipment works and doors are secure. All staff, he said, has received crisis management training and knows what to do.

Finch said parents can help by reporting doors kept open or unlocked, and the situations will be corrected.

School board Chairwoman Jacqueline Kelleher said school safety would be the first item on the agenda of a special meeting scheduled for Monday at 6:30 p.m. at the Aquaculture School, 60 St. Stephen's Road.

Celine Reyes, a parent with a kindergartner and second-grader at the school, said she still worries.

“I would like them to address the safety issue. To me, the school is wide open. Anyone can get in,”

Reyes said. At dismissal time, she said it is not uncommon for parents leaving the gymnasium's locked doors to hold the doors open for other parents.

When she comes to read to a class, as she did on Friday, she is buzzed in, signs in at the office, and then proceeds to the class.

“They don't know my background or what could be happening in my head that day,” said Reyes.

Charlene Colson, the parent of a 7-year-old, said this should be a wake-up call for schools everywhere.

“This could happen anywhere,” said Colson, lingering outside the school long after students had started their day.

“I can't think about getting a phone call that says, ‘Come to the school. There is trouble,’” she said.



## TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN

SUPPORT FOR THE 26 VICTIMS' KIN

# Families establish Sandy Hook fund

By Linda Conner Lambeck

NEWTOWN — Nearly 20 people crowded into Rob and Deb Accomando's kitchen Saturday, cooking for the families who lost children a day before in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

Some, like the Accomandos, were parents of children who survived the tragedy.

Rebekah Harriman-Stites' 7-year-old son attended a different elementary school, but wrestled with Jack Pinto, one of the victims.

Others were neighbors and friends. As they talked, they realized baking casseroles wasn't enough.

They heard of one father who didn't have a suit to wear to his child's funeral.

Other parents were scrambling to collect enough frequent flyer miles to get relatives from across the country to attend the funerals of grandchildren, nieces and nephews — and then inexpensive places for them to stay.

The group decided to establish a relief fund called the "My Sandy Hook Family Fund" to provide immediate and long-term support to the 26 families who lost children or other family members in the Sandy

## United Way, UConn launch assistance

A variety of local organizations and others have organized efforts to help the families affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

The United Way of Western Connecticut, in partnership with Newtown Savings Bank, has created the "Sandy Hook School Support Fund" to provide support services to the families and community members.

Check donations may be mailed to: Sandy Hook School Support Fund, c/o Newtown Savings Bank, 39 Main St., Newtown CT 06470.

Or they may be dropped off at any Newtown Savings Bank branch.

For questions about your check donation within local Newtown Savings Bank branches, please call 800-461-0672. Or, at the United Way, call David Deschenes, 203-792-5330 ext. 239, or Isabel Almeida, 203-792-5330 ext. 106. You can also donate by credit card. Go to: <https://newtown.uwwesternct.org/>

### UCONN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The University of Connecticut has created a memorial scholarship fund to honor those who died.

The Sandy Hook School Memorial Scholarship Fund at the University of Connecticut will provide financial aid for any students who currently attend the elementary school as well as siblings of those killed in the assault and dependents of teachers and other adults who also lost their lives who are accepted to attend the University in the future.

Donations will be collected through

the University of Connecticut Foundation to establish a fund in anticipation of supporting the Sandy Hook Elementary students enrolled in the K-4 grades today who will be of college age beginning in approximately 2021.

UConn's Hall of Fame women's basketball coach Geno Auriemma and his wife, Kathy, have made an \$80,000 lead gift to the fund.

For information about the fund and how to donate, go to the University of Connecticut ([www.uconn.edu](http://www.uconn.edu)) and UConn Foundation ([www.foundation.uconn.edu](http://www.foundation.uconn.edu)) websites.

### HOCHSPRUNG FAMILY FUND

The family of Dawn Hochsprung has established the "Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung Memorial Fund" at the Waterbury Teachers Federal Credit Union. Hochsprung was the principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School who was killed on Dec. 14.

Contributions may be dropped off or mailed to the following:

Waterbury Connecticut Teachers Federal Credit Union, 773 Straits Turnpike, Middlebury, CT 06762; or 24 Rowan Street Extension, Danbury, CT 06811.

For more information, call 203-758-9500 or 800-992-2226.

### CLERGY AVAILABLE

The Association of Religious Communities of Greater Danbury will be available to assist local families with crisis counseling services.

To request assistance, contact Rev.

P.J. Leopold at 203-792-9450, ext. 102 or by email at [pjl@arcforpeace.org](mailto:pjl@arcforpeace.org)

### ART THERAPY

The Family Study Center in Danbury is providing art therapy groups for the students of Sandy Hook School.

These groups will be led by art therapists experienced in traumatic loss work with children and will be provided at no cost to the families.

For more information, contact Ellie Nicol at 203-778-2020, ext. 12.

### ACUPUNCTURE AVAILABLE

The Connecticut Society of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, a nonprofit association of licensed acupuncturists, is providing trauma recovery treatment services.

All members of the community are welcome to receive free treatment. Acupuncture is available for children.

Volunteers will be available in Sandy Hook beginning Friday, at 4 p.m. for free treatments at 111 Church Hill Road, across from the Newtown United Methodist Church.

Appointments are not necessary. Hours are Friday, 4 to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Christmas Eve, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Christmas day, noon to 3 p.m. The service will continue through January. Donations are appreciated.

— Staff reports

Stites, one of the Family Fund organizers.

Harriman-Stites called it a neighbor-to-neighbor effort.

"We know that we are lucky. We need to help our neighbors," she said.

It is unbelievable to Harriman-Stites that the night before Jack Pinto died, he was at a Newtown Youth Wrestling Association meet with her son. Monday, she went to his memorial service.

"We know all these families personally," she said. "Our kids were in day care together. They're on sports teams together. We go to church together."

"And everyone is asking: How can we help?

The fund allows everyone with a burning need to 'do something' to help take some of the burdens off of these families in their time of incredible pain."

The group has also developed a network of community-based social workers who will work directly with the families to determine their specific needs. Based on this information, additional donations and resources will be sought.

*To make a donation, visit [MySandyHookFamilyFund.com](http://MySandyHookFamilyFund.com). One hundred percent of the net proceeds will be donated to the victims' families, the organizers said.*

WORST FEARS CONFIRMED

## First responders knew 'it was something bad'

By John Pirro

NEWTOWN — Off-duty Redding Police Officer Chris Vadas was picking up coffee for his fiancée, who works for the Newtown Board of Education, when two police cruisers with lights on and sirens blaring flashed by shortly after 9:30 a.m. Friday.

About the same time, emergency medical technician Roger Connor Jr. was taking a shower, getting ready for another day, when he heard "the tone go out," letting him know that he and other members of the Newtown Ambulance Corps were needed at the Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Vadas' initial thought was that there had been an accident. It wasn't until he arrived at the school department's office a few minutes later that he realized it was something far different.

"The first selectman came up to me and said I had to leave the building," said Vadas, who served as a police officer in Newtown until joining the Redding department six years ago.

"We're in a lockdown, there's been an incident at Sandy Hook Elementary School," was all she told him, Vadas said.

Connor was almost ready to jump in his car when his father, Roger Sr., a lieutenant with Western Connecticut State University Police Department, called to ask, "What's going on in Newtown?"

The answer was something both men would learn only later: Twenty-six kids and teachers had been mowed down by a 20-year-old gunman.

On Monday night, hundreds of people packed the Newtown High School auditorium to honor the shooting victims and to hear President Barack Obama. They stood and applauded

for the men and women who responded to the call from Sandy Hook Elementary Friday morning, some of whom are now struggling to deal with the carnage they witnessed, officials say.

Vadas wasn't supposed to be there.

Because he knew some of the firefighters at the Sandy Hook Fire Department, located adjacent to the school, he drove over.

"Stick around, we might need you," he said one told him.

Minutes later, he accompanied them to the school, where an injured woman limped from the building, screaming, "We need an ambulance," he said. Vadas helped her into a waiting vehicle, then turned around to see a state trooper with a young boy cradled in his arms.

"His body was limp," said Vadas, who appeared shaken as he described the ordeal. "I don't know if he made it. I don't even know his name."

He helped the trooper load the boy into the ambulance, moved the woman into the front, then stood back and watched it speed away.

The parking area around the school was jammed with emergency vehicles when Connor drove in.

En route, he'd learned there had been a shooting, and when he arrived police told him three paramedics were already inside, tending to the wounded.

Activating the mass-casualty protocol, Connor assumed the responsibilities of the EMS coordinator and began organizing the other ambulance crews to transport the wounded to area hospitals.

But as time passed and no more victims emerged, Connor got a sinking feeling.

"You knew in your gut it was something bad," he said.



Jason Rearick/Staff photographer

Newtown Volunteer Ambulance EMT Roger Connor Jr., at his home in Newtown on Saturday, was a first responder to the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.



A teddy bear and flowers sit in the cruiser of Newtown Police Officer Maryhelen McCarthy while she places the items at a makeshift memorial outside St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church in Newtown on Sunday, in memory of the 20 children killed at Sandy Hook School.

Julio Cortez/Associated Press

Finally, police told him there would be no others requiring medical assistance, and his worst fears were confirmed.

Vadas, whose children had attended Sandy Hook

Elementary years earlier, remained at the school until sometime after 11 a.m.

"At some point, I realized there was nothing else I could do," he said.

Before he left, estimates

were that there had been "three to 10 victims," Vadas said, but there was no news on whether they were dead or just injured.

It wasn't until he was driving to work a few

hours later that his sister called and told him that 27 people were dead, 20 of them children.

"I was just dumbfounded. I didn't know what to think," Vadas said.